



Flourishing Together in Church Leadership

A resource for leaders in the local church



DIOCESE of OXFORD

A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world

The Diocese of Oxford is the Church of England in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Together, we are the Church, called and sent by God as disciples of Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. We are a living, growing network of more than a thousand congregations, chaplaincies and schools.

Together, we are called to be more Christ-like: to be the Church of the Beatitudes: contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world.

Together, we work with God and with others for the common good in every place in one of the great crossroads of the world.

Together, we are called to proclaim the Christian faith afresh in this generation with joy and hope and love.

Together, we are called to dream dreams and see visions of what could be and see those visions come to birth.

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Foreword by the Bishop of Oxford

'We are the Body of Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body. Let us then pursue all that makes for peace and builds up our common life.' [Introductory words to the Peace: *Common Worship*]

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed enormous demands on the communities we serve and on our churches. The whole church has responded with huge creativity and energy: first moving worship, prayer, pastoral care and community online; then engaging with and supporting needs in the wider community in such generous ways, and then beginning the process of re-opening our churches for private prayer and public worship.

The crisis has underlined how much we need each other and how much everyone in any kind of church leadership needs to hear Paul's words to watch over ourselves and over the whole church (Acts 20.28). The Church is the whole people of God – clergy and laity, gathered and sent – participating in the mission of God. The recent Church of England report *Setting God's People Free*¹ made it clear that lay people and clergy are equal partners in the life of a local church.

As we form Christian community together, we do it on the basis of our baptismal calling, which undergirds our understanding

that in God's eyes we are equal in worth and status, complementary in gifting, mutually accountable and equal partners in God's mission.

Those in ministry roles, both lay and ordained, need support and encouragement in their vocation and ministry, protection from unreasonable expectations and projections, safeguarding of their time off and time with friends and family, and the love of a Christian community around them.

Those in lay positions of responsibility in our churches need to be affirmed and supported as they serve the local church in partnership with clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers; they need to be in roles which fit their gifting and interest, protection from being overburdened, and to be able to give up or change responsibility without suffering from guilt.

Our churches need to be places where all are valued, as we move more and more deeply into God's love for us. They need to be communities of respectful listening in which we discern together how God is at work.

In some parishes, clergy and lay people need to learn to relate to each other differently. Some of the dominant cultures, assumptions and expectations need to be challenged and reconsidered. Clergy have sacramental authority, and responsibility for worship, but this is not an invitation to clericalism and an assumption that 'Father (or Mother) knows best'. Clergy are not indispensable, and feeling as if they are can lead to exhaustion and burnout. Some can appear threatened by lay engagement and lay leadership, and this makes any meaningful participation by lay people in the life of the church very difficult to create or sustain.

Many clergy long to share the running of the church with lay people but find it difficult to identify those who have a real desire to participate in this, or find that there is an unevenness of commitment in those who do. In some parishes, lay people appear to act as 'consumers' of a service rather than partners in the building of God's Kingdom, leaving all the work to the vicar and complaining when the results disappoint them. Many lay people have rich gifts, skills and experience to bring to the tasks of leadership in the church

but feel frustrated that their limited time is not well used. Others are willing to take on responsibilities, but need encouragement, training and supervision to enable them to flourish. Occasionally, unhealthy power dynamics emerge, which need to be named and challenged.

The key to a healthy, flourishing church is a shared desire to become more Christ-like: contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world.

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

(Col. 3:12-14)



January 2021

Introduction

***Flourishing Together* is a practical resource, primarily for churchwardens, PCC members and lay members of ministry teams, as they work with clergy and those in authorised lay ministry in leading the local church. It will help lay leaders to establish and maintain good practice: in prayerful, collaborative ministry; and in caring for ourselves and others by having reasonable expectations of each other in our differing areas of responsibility.**

What we offer here is encouragement:

- to care for your own health and wellbeing, as an individual and as a church leader, in whatever way is right for you
- to attend, with care, to the health and wellbeing of those who share church leadership with you
- to establish and maintain healthy and sustainable patterns of work within your role.

In February 2020 the General Synod of the Church of England agreed a Covenant for the Care and Well-being of Clergy². As part of this work, General Synod invites local churches and dioceses across the country to consider how they can support the wellbeing of clergy by participating in *The Big Conversation* about clergy care and wellbeing.³ This booklet will

also help you to participate in that conversation.

The Covenant for the Care and Well-being of Clergy was based on the belief that 'when clergy are healthy and well-supported, they are able to focus on others, while also looking after their own needs with the strength and realism which that support gives them. That way the whole church is blessed and enriched.'

'Healthy leaders make healthy churches'

Roger Matthews

In parallel with the work of the national church, the Diocese of Oxford published *Flourishing in Ministry*, which ordained and lay ministers have found helpful in seeking to 'keep watch over yourselves' (Acts 20:28) as they exercise ministry in God's Church.

We have a common vision to be a more Christ-like Church: contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world. The way in which we realise this vision will be different in every community. Our large and diverse Diocese encompasses churches of different sizes, traditions, contexts and leadership structures. Some parts of this booklet may be more or less relevant in your particular context. Do use what is useful and leave what is not.

We hope that the examples of good practice and useful resources in this booklet will better equip *all* in positions of church leadership to flourish together as we grow God's kingdom in our local communities.

If you have further suggestions for good practice or resources that might be useful to others, email flourish@oxford.anglican.org



Flourishing individually and together

The Church is called to model a different way of living – a way of fulfilment and wholeness where all can flourish. This is especially true in anxious times and against a background of growing awareness of mental health issues. It’s not an easy calling. Yet when we work well together, as the whole people of God, lay and ordained, we offer a powerful alternative model for life and ministry – and others notice. In better caring for ourselves and for others within our respective roles we both obey Jesus’ command to ‘love one another’ (John 13:35) and witness to the fullness of life Christ brings (John 10:10).

One small booklet cannot address the wellbeing needs of every person in every church context. Each of us is an individual and we all flourish in different ways. In addition, our churches are set in different contexts; urban, suburban or rural, small or large.

Your wellbeing

What promotes your wellbeing? For some it will be running marathons or joining a rambling group. Others will enjoy meeting friends in the pub or having a long soak in the bath, going to a football match or curling up with a good book. Spending time with family and

those who love you is important. Whatever it is, the time we each spend taking care of our own wellbeing is not selfish or optional but an important part of being a human who is loved and called by God. God rested on the sabbath, and we must rest too (Ex. 20:11).

Take a moment to contemplate how you care for your own wellbeing by answering the questions in the self-care audit on pages 9–11.

The audit can also be downloaded:

 [oxford.anglican.org/
flourishing-together](https://oxford.anglican.org/flourishing-together)

(see *Self-care*)

Self-care audit

This assessment tool provides an overview of effective strategies to maintain self-care. After completing the full assessment, choose one item from each area that you will actively work to improve.

Using the scale below, rate the following areas in terms of frequency:

5 Frequently (I make it a priority)

4 Fairly regularly (I do it if I can)

3 Occasionally (ad hoc with some pattern of frequency)

2 Rarely (ad hoc with no pattern of frequency)

1 Never (not at all or never even occurred to me)

Physical self-care

- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise
- Get regular medical care for prevention
- Get medical care when needed
- Take time off when needed
- Get massages
- Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other physical activity that is fun

- Get enough sleep
- Wear clothes you like
- Take holidays
- Take day trips or short breaks
- Make time away from telephones
- Other

Psychological self-care

- Make time for self-reflection
- Write in a journal
- Read books, etc. that are unrelated to work
- Do something in which you are not the expert or in charge
- Decrease stress in your life
- Let others know different aspects of you
- Notice your inner experience – listen to your thoughts, judgements, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings

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- Engage your intelligence in a new area, e.g. go to an art gallery, history exhibit, sports event, auction, theatre
 - Practise receiving from others
 - Be curious
 - Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes
 - Other

Emotional self-care

- Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
- Stay in contact with people important to you
- Give yourself affirmation, praise yourself
- Love yourself
- Re-read favourite books/re-watch favourite films
- Identify comforting activities, objects, relationships, places and seek them out
- Allow yourself to cry
- Find things that make you laugh
- Express your outrage in social action, letters and donations, marches, protests
- Other

Spiritual self-care

- Make time for reflection
- Spend time with nature
- Find a spiritual connection or community
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish your optimism and hope
- Be aware of non-material aspects of life
- Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- Be open to not knowing
- Identify what is meaningful to you and notice its place in your life
- Meditate
- Pray
- Sing
- Have experiences of awe
- Contribute to causes in which you believe
- Seek out things that inspire you (books, talks, podcasts, music, etc.)
- Other

Workplace or professional self-care

- Take a break during the work day (e.g. lunch)
- Take time to chat with co-workers
- Make quiet time to complete tasks
- Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- Set limits with your parishioners/colleagues
- Balance your workload so that no one day or part of a day is 'too much'
- Arrange your work space so it is relaxing and comforting
- Get regular supervision or consultation
- Have a peer support group
- Develop a non-stressful area of professional interest
- Other

Balance

- Strive for balance within your work life and work day
- Strive for balance in work, family life, relationships, play and rest

What stands out that you want to improve on most?

What do you notice? Where do you need to pay more attention to your wellbeing? It might help you to reflect on these questions on your own or with someone you trust.

Do the audit again in a few months' time and notice what has changed. Can you encourage others who share church leadership with you to do the audit too?

Most of us work with others for considerable amounts of time. Our working environment, whether paid or voluntary, can have a significant effect on our general sense of wellbeing. Everyone in church leadership, lay and ordained, is encouraged to establish and maintain healthy and sustainable patterns of work within their role which will enable them and others to flourish.

Your own experience

Take a moment to reflect on a time when you worked well with others, whether or not it was within a church context. How did that experience make you feel? What contributed to that experience of working well?

You might want to jot down some notes to remind you of what happens when you're working well with others.

You have probably reflected on sharing enthusiasm for the task and enjoying each other's company, and perhaps some of the following:

- clear roles and responsibilities
- excellent communication
- mutual care and respect
- clear boundaries.

You might have come up with additional aspects of working well with others.

On the following pages you'll find:

- practical ideas and advice from others in church leadership across the Diocese
- some indications of reasonable expectations churches should have of clergy, Licensed Lay Ministers and others in church leadership roles, whether full-time or part-time
- resources for further support and information.

Mutual care and respect

Having a culture in which all are treated with dignity and respect, free from intimidation and harassment, is the first step in ensuring the wellbeing of all. The commandment to 'love one another as I have loved you' (John 13:34) is central to our Christian discipleship. We are called to challenge aggressive and discriminatory behaviours and to create communities where everyone feels reassured that they will be treated with respect.

The Diocese's *Dignity and Respect in Ministry and at Work* policy has been designed to empower anyone who feels they may have been the victim of unacceptable behaviour such as bullying or harassment, whether minor or otherwise, to take action, and sets out ways in which we can treat one another with dignity and respect.

As we seek to support each other to flourish in our ministries, we all need to be sensitive to each other's feelings and sense of privacy. Asking how someone is, and showing genuine interest, is usually received very differently from 'you should...' statements of well-intentioned but thinly veiled advice.

'... think about how best you can talk about clergy care and wellbeing with your local clergy, in a way that is supportive, but definitely not intrusive'

Reflection and Action for Local Congregations

What do church leaders find helpful?

- Make sure communication (verbal, written and electronic) is always courteous and respectful. Resist the temptation to hit the send button on emails too soon. Some people go away and return to re-read an email later (or maybe the following morning) before deciding to send it.
- Be honest – and kind – with each other. Speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).
- Respect each other's individuality and personal space. We all need privacy from time to time, especially when we're often in the public eye.
- Accept that some people choose to protect their private lives more than others. Inviting people to an event is fine, assuming acceptance is not.

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- Give each other space to process. Those who offer pastoral care to others may need the space to process these encounters, especially when they are particularly difficult or touch a nerve.
 - Agree and uphold a code of conduct for meetings.
 - Ask yourself how you would want to be treated, and treat others in this way.
 - Understand that different personality types respond to situations differently. What about doing a personality testing exercise with people you work with closely? (For example, Myers Briggs, Belbin for Teams, Gilmore Fraleigh.)

Reasonable expectations of all church leaders include:

- not being available 24/7
- not being contacted when taking time off, unless there are exceptional circumstances
- personal and family boundaries being respected.

Support and resources

- Dignity and Respect in Ministry and at Work* (The Diocese of Oxford) (see *Dignity**)
- Talk to your Parish Development Adviser about how s/he can support you as you establish a culture of greater mutual care and respect. (oxford.anglican.org/parish-development-advisers)
- Honest Conversations in Churches: Exploring expectations together* by Elizabeth Jordan (Grove Books)
- Challenging Bullying in Churches* by Rosemary Power (Grove Books)
- The Power of Vulnerability – a TED talk from Brené Brown (see *Vulnerability**)
- The Science of Emotions – a TEDx talk from Jaak Panksepp (see *Emotions**)

*oxford.anglican.org/flourishing-together

PCC Code of Conduct

Over the years, the PCC has developed a set of 'ground rules' which underpin the conduct of the meetings. Some may feel a little prescriptive but over time they have proved their worth in facilitating trust, honesty and accountability.

These 'ground rules' are as follows:

- Contributions to discussions are made through the chair.
- We aim to listen carefully to one another.
- While verbal discussion about agenda items with members of the congregation and other Council members is to be encouraged, to avoid confusion and factions, it is asked that PCC members do not use emails, letters or social media as a means of discussing Council decisions following a meeting or of debating an issue prior to a meeting. If a PCC member is unable to attend a meeting and wishes their views to be taken into consideration, an email or letter outlining these views should be sent to the chair who will then ensure that the views are fed into the discussion at the meeting.
- Discussions at PCC are confidential, but decisions and minutes belong to the whole church and will be communicated later.
- Discussions are to be conducted with grace and love, speaking and listening to each other with respect – particularly when we disagree with one another – remembering that we are elected to represent the views of church members, not just our own agenda.
- If a decision is taken by the majority of the Council it is the responsibility of the whole Council to then support it.
- If there is a paper or indeed any supporting document that is maybe of interest or help to the whole Council, relating to an agenda item, it should first be sent to the vicar.

Boundaries and communication for flourishing

Setting and maintaining clear boundaries is important in all aspects of our lives. It helps us to say 'Yes' or 'No' without a sense of obligation or guilt. This is particularly relevant in our church responsibilities, which can build up over time because 'there's no-one else to do it', 'it's quicker to do it myself' or 'it's only this once'. This is a slippery slope and before we know it we've lost sight of the healthy boundaries that enable us to protect other vital aspects of our lives which help us to flourish.

Advice from church leaders – both ordained and lay:

- Make sure each member of clergy's day off is known and respected, except in an emergency.
- Be clear about what is an emergency and what constitutes the need to be contacted or to contact others in an emergency.
- Establish and maintain a rhythm of sabbath each week which enables you and those close to you to rest and flourish. This is not an optional extra in the Christian life (Ex. 20:8).
- Be clear (with yourself and others) when you are on and off duty. This is particularly important for those exercising leadership voluntarily alongside other work or caring responsibilities.
- Be sensitive to others in 'crossover' times, when they might be attending church social functions. Are they in role or not? If not, don't talk shop with them.
- Streamline the number of meetings you hold or attend and make sure their purpose is clear.
- Make it a priority to have administrative help for clergy.
- Suggest clergy divert their phones when taking a day off. Consider (you or someone else) offering to answer diverted calls, perhaps on a rota basis.

Below are some points all church leaders can consider in establishing sustainable boundaries and ensuring good communication:

- Consider how best to communicate with other church leaders. In some circumstances a face-to-face conversation

or a phone call will be more appropriate than a quickly sent email, especially when dealing with sensitive issues. In other circumstances it will be more appropriate to communicate in writing or by email so that a full paper-trail can be kept, for example regarding safeguarding issues or in order to manage anxiety and good mental health.

- Publish a clear contact list for enquiries.
- Respect the private time and family space of others, lay and ordained.
- Be sensitive to the need for privacy of clergy families living in church houses. Remember that it is their home.
- Try to avoid answering the phone or sending emails before 9am and after 9pm, unless for personal circumstances or in an emergency.

Those in a church leadership role should know that stipendiary clergy are entitled to:

- take at least one 24-hour period of rest from ministry on a regular day each week

- take an annual retreat of approximately five days
- take time each day to say morning and evening prayer, either alone or with others
- take regular time for reflection, prayer and study
- take at least five days a year for personal ministerial development
- take the full annual leave entitlement of 36 days, including 4–6 Sundays
- full reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred as part of ministry.

At a local level, Self-Supporting Ministers and Licensed Lay Ministers will have working agreements which can take into account individual circumstances.



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(see *Working Agreement*)

All clergy and lay church leaders are encouraged to take time regularly to reflect and pray with a spiritual director. For many clergy, it will also be useful to work with a ministry accompanier from time to time.

Support and resources

- *Refusing to be Indispensable: Vacating the centre of church life* by Andy Griffiths (Grove Books)
- *Honest Conversations in Churches: Exploring expectations together* by Elizabeth Jordan (Grove Books)
- *Transforming Conversation: How Jesus talked to people* by Rob Bewley (Grove Books)
- oxford.anglican.org/spiritual-direction
- oxford.anglican.org/ministry-accompaniers
- Recording a voicemail message (John Truscott Resources) (see *Voicemail**)
- Making a case for change (John Truscott Resources) (see *Change**)

- Talk about taking time off (John Truscott Resources) (see *Time off**)
- Become a better emailer (John Truscott Resources) (see *Email**)
- Church members can burn out too (John Truscott Resources) (see *Burnout**)

'When my children were small, one challenged me as to why someone from church was more important than them when I answered the phone during our evening meal. Lesson learned – the answerphone is always on and I can choose to answer the phone or give priority to my family.'

A Licensed Lay Minister

*oxford.anglican.org/flourishing-together

Mental wellbeing and flourishing

In the last few years, there has been a helpful, and long overdue, focus on the importance of building resilience for mental wellbeing. It is becoming clear that if we don't pay attention to our mental wellbeing we risk tipping over into mental illness. Many of us, to some extent or other, are affected by issues of mental illness: for ourselves, among our families, friends or church, and in the wider community. We are aware of the importance of caring for our own mental wellbeing and that of others with whom we share leadership in the church, but it can be surprisingly difficult to do.

Good practice:

- Be alert to signs of anxiety or depression in yourself and others.
 - Be aware of what makes you or others feel stressed, and try to minimise the effects of stress.
 - Be aware that some times of year (e.g. Advent, Lent) may be particularly stressful for all church leaders.
 - Monitoring your workload and noticing extended periods of busyness can help avoid the damaging effects of overwork.
 - Can you encourage your colleagues to monitor their own workload too? Take care, though, not to do this in a way that might be received as intrusive.
 - Try to spend time in a place you can relax, such as the garden.
 - Try to take regular breaks from work.
 - If possible, turn your phone off at least an hour before you go to bed.
 - Be aware of how much of your day you spend in front of a computer and ask yourself (or someone you trust) whether it's reasonable.
- There is a strong link between mental and physical wellbeing, so look after your physical wellbeing too. Ask yourself:
- Am I getting enough sleep?
 - How healthy is my eating and my alcohol intake?

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- Do I exercise regularly enough?
Can I take a break to go for a walk today?
 - Am I spending a reasonable amount of time on my hobbies each week?

Sometimes, despite our best intentions, the small things which could help us avoid or ease mental illness are precisely the things that having a mental illness prevents us from doing, such as taking regular exercise or avoiding long periods of overwork. Be alert to signs of anxiety or depression in yourself and others. It could indicate an emerging mental health issue. If you are concerned, the following support structures and resources might help you take the next step.

Support and resources

- Mind (mind.org.uk)
- Anxiety UK (anxietyuk.org.uk)
- Depression UK (depressionuk.org)
- Beat – eating disorders charity (beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

- The Society of Mary and Martha, Sheldon – a Christian retreat centre specialising in wellbeing (sheldon.uk.com)
- Sheldon Hub – a confidential online forum for clergy (sheldonthub.org)
- Spiritual direction (spidirnetwork.org.uk)
- Ministry accompanier's network (oxford.anglican.org/ministry-accompaniers)
- Oxford Mindfulness Centre (oxfordmindfulness.org)

Do not hesitate to contact your archdeacon if you need support.

'Things in the parish really got me down for a couple of years. I realised I was struggling, but I did my best to hide it from everyone in church. I was worried depression would affect my prospects of finding my next role. I'm so glad I went to my GP for help. I feel I can cope again now.'

A full-time vicar

Flourishing in roles and responsibilities

Active Christian ministry, whether full-time or part-time, lay or ordained, can be demanding and challenging. For some of us this is because ministry and mission are a natural part of our lives as Christian disciples and can't be separated from other aspects of life. For others, the ever-present expectation that there is more we could do is difficult to overlook. Though some have Statements of Particulars, job descriptions or working agreements, few ministry roles are clearly defined and there are seldom clear, measurable and bounded objectives to be completed. Ministry is, by its nature, ongoing and open-ended.

Lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities of church leaders, whether lay or ordained, can lead to uncertainty, frustration, and even conflict between leaders. A proactive approach to clarifying roles and responsibilities for lay and ordained church leaders can help to avoid confusion and frustration.

Advice from lay and ordained church leaders:

- Establish clear – and realistic – working agreements and areas of responsibility for all roles.
- Share working agreements (or job descriptions/ministry agreements) between members of leadership teams. This will help lay and ordained leaders to understand the wider context of each other's ministries and where bottlenecks are likely to occur.
- Sometimes it can be helpful for key colleagues (such as churchwardens) to be involved in shaping the role descriptions of clergy to ensure that workload is at an appropriate level.
- Be open to renegotiating these agreements when necessary, such as in periods of prolonged illness or changes in personal circumstances.
- Establish clear lines of authority and accountability for all roles.
- Establish and follow an appropriate annual reflection process for all roles to reflect with a trusted person on the past year and seek God's guidance for the year ahead.
- Seek the support of deanery and diocesan staff when appropriate, for example by using Parish Development Advisers to facilitate an away-day.

- Discuss and clarify the distinctive roles of the ministry team and the PCC (see page 29).
- Participate in high-quality training when needed (separately or with fellow church leaders).
- Enable individuals to lay down a role or responsibility when appropriate. This will probably include celebrating what has been good and affirming about their time in the role, and praying for God's guidance for the future.

When there are new members of a leadership team:

- Take the earliest opportunity to meet as a team to get to know one another and to establish some healthy ground rules and boundaries.
- Discuss and agree new working agreements for all roles.
- Discuss team members' gifts and passions so that each feels valued and affirmed. You could use Personal Discipleship Plans to help with this.

- Refer to the benefice profile to reflect on how the work of the benefice is moving forward.

Those in a church leadership role should be aware that the appropriate conduct of clergy is laid out fully in the *Guidelines for the professional conduct of the clergy 2015*. It is helpful to bear in mind that clergy have responsibilities and commitments as part of their role. These include the responsibility for:

- chairing PCC meetings, unless s/he has authorised an elected lay vice-chair to chair meetings
- sharing leadership with appropriate lay leaders
- the worship within the church(es).

Clergy are committed to:

- establishing and exercising a daily pattern of ministry that models a prayerful and enriching Christian life, which may include time spent with and for family, others, and self
- spending time with people who don't attend church. Parish clergy have a duty of care for all residents of the parish, regardless of their faith

 [oxford.anglican.org/personal-discipleship-plan](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/personal-discipleship-plan)

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- taking time to reflect on their ministry before the annual Ministerial Development Review – this includes reflecting on wellbeing and self-care.

Support and resources

- Church Representation Rules (see *CRR**)
- *Guidelines for the professional conduct of the clergy 2015* (see *Guidelines**)
- *Rotas, Rules and Rectors* by Matthew Clements (Troubador Publishing Ltd)
- *Healthy Leaders and Healthy Churches* by Roger Matthews (Grove Books)
- *Leading in a Second Chair: Insights for first- and second-chair leaders* by Tim Harle (Grove Books)
- The role of a church leader (John Truscott Resources) (see *Leader**)



*oxford.anglican.org/flourishing-together

Flourishing through delegation

Delegating well is an art which can be learned, practised and developed. As church consultant John Truscott notes, 'Delegating is far more than dumping work you do not want to do yourself on someone else. It is a long-term means of developing people to be the best that they can be in service for God.'⁴

A key skill in being a good leader is knowing how to use your own gifts and those of others wisely. Understanding your own strengths and limitations and those of your team is foundational and allows you to discern when to hand over the responsibility for certain aspects of your role to others. Consider using a Personal Discipleship Plan to identify your own gifts and those of your fellow leaders.

Advice from church leaders:

- Be clear about what the task/role involves, both in terms of responsibility and time.
- Be clear about accountability and allow people to 'own' the role.
- Be clear about expectations, deadlines and results.
- Arrange training and development opportunities where required.
- Allow the person you've asked to say 'No' if they feel that's the right response.
- Don't change the goalposts, especially not at the last minute and without proper and appropriate communication.
- 'Check in' from time to time with the person who has taken on the role. Be available to support and advise, while being careful not to micro-manage.
- Give gentle and honest feedback to help with development.
- Allow the person doing the role to make mistakes and learn from them.
- Value and respect the contribution of the person to whom the task has been delegated. Don't criticise behind their back.
- Thank the person for their contribution – whatever the result!
- Don't take credit for the work of someone else.
- Don't apportion blame if results don't turn out as expected.

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- Don't expect the task to be done as you would do it.

Support and resources

- Personal Discipleship Plan: oxford.anglican.org/personal-discipleship-plan
- How to give and receive criticism (John Truscott Resources) (see *Criticism**)
- Working with a No 2 (John Truscott Resources) (see *No 2**)
- Set my leaders free (John Truscott Resources) (see *Free**)
- How not to Delegate! (John Truscott Resources) (see *Not delegate**)

'Delegation is a long-term investment, not a quick fix. Do you ever micro-manage those you delegate to – or leave them without any help?'

John Truscott



*oxford.anglican.org/flourishing-together

Flourishing churchwardens

The churchwarden's role is set within the wider volunteer culture of the church. While churchwardens themselves are, of course, volunteers, this essential role differs from other voluntary roles within the church. Churchwardens are bishop's officers, elected by the meeting of parishioners for their experience, gifts and skills, and admitted to office annually by the archdeacon.

The role of churchwarden is a position of responsibility and trust which calls for discretion and discernment. Knowing when – and when not – to share information with others is an important gift in this role.

Arguably the most important gift is the time you can give to the role. For some, time will be limited by combining the role with a full-time job and numerous family commitments. Others will have fewer personal commitments and will be happy to give more time to their church activities. Give what time you can, while caring for your own wellbeing and that of your family, and don't feel guilty or pressured into giving more time than you reasonably can.

As Matthew Clements notes in *Rules, Rotas and Rectors*, the churchwarden is like 'the oil in a car engine which lubricates all the moving parts. By doing so, it reduces friction between various components which move at

different speeds... It's there and it just does the job, quietly and continuously, day in, day out'. His excellent and very readable book is a helpful and wise reflection on the important role of churchwardens.

Advice from churchwardens:

- Accept that you can't and shouldn't do everything yourself.
- Be clear about what are the essentials of the role and what are additions that can be done by others, or not done at all.
- Find other people to take on the parts of the role that can be shared, such as administration.
- Be clear about the amount of time you will spend on churchwarden duties. It shouldn't be a full-time job.
- Meet regularly with your fellow churchwardens, the clergy and ministry team.
- Participate in training for churchwardens.

-
- Be available and approachable when people want to speak to you. Be careful, though, that you are not constantly available and that you are discreet in what you share.
 - Try to remain impartial when there are disputes within the church.
 - Remember that you are the bishop's officer and have direct access to the bishop if you have concerns about your clergy. In fact, you have a duty to speak to the bishop when necessary.
 - Remember that your term of office is for one year. If necessary, or appropriate, you can stand down when your term of office comes to an end.
 - Ask for help from the Area Dean and/or Deanery Lay Chair when needed, especially when the parish is in vacancy. Remember that the Area Dean shares responsibility with the wardens when a parish is in vacancy.
 - Have access to email and know the basics of using a computer.
 - Plan for the future. You won't always be the churchwarden. Who can you bring alongside you now to mentor?

Reasonable expectations for churchwardens include:

- meeting with the clergy team at least monthly to discuss ministry and missional matters
- having clarity about the roles and responsibilities of clergy and other church leaders
- maintaining open and honest communication channels
- praying together when you meet.

Support and resources

- Diocesan guidance for churchwardens (oxford.anglican.org/guidance-for-churchwardens)
- Churchcare (churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare)
- *Rotas, Rules and Rectors* by Matthew Clements (Troubadour Publishing Ltd).

'the churchwarden is ultimately responsible for almost everything in a church that does not need to be done by the vicar. If the churchwarden doesn't do it, then s/he is responsible for making sure that it gets done by someone.'

Matthew Clements



**Canada Geese fly in formation.
When one leader tires, another
will take the lead.**

Flourishing Parochial Church Councils

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), together with the vicar and the churchwardens, form the leadership of a parish. The PCC has a similar role to the board of trustees of a charity, with certain legal responsibilities. PCC members work with others to lead the church in 'promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical'.⁵

Being a PCC member is a significant leadership role and a position of trust and service to the whole church. The role, like that of churchwarden, is set within a wider volunteer culture and relies on the goodwill and commitment of volunteers.

Each PCC member will be able to offer different amounts of time to church activity. Whatever time is offered should be respected by the church community. Many PCC members attend meetings after long days at work and might not even have eaten before the meeting. Some will feel the pressure of expectation from self or others to give more time, but it's important to keep a balance with your other commitments and care for your own wellbeing and that of your family. You shouldn't feel guilty or pressured into giving more time than you reasonably can.

The Church of England's Church Representation Rules indicate that PCC members should serve a term

of up to three years and have a year of rest after three consecutive three-year terms. This allows long-standing members to stand down, permanently or for a year, without guilt. While there are clear regulations about the size of a PCC, it will help the working of the PCC if it is in the 'Goldilocks zone' – neither too large nor too small.

Good practice for PCCs:

- Be clear about the role of the PCC, especially that PCC members are trustees of a charity and must comply with charity law.
- Have a good PCC chair. The incumbent is the chair of the PCC and can choose to delegate the role to an elected deputy lay chair for the whole or part of a meeting or meetings. If chairing meetings is not within the skill set of the incumbent, encourage them to delegate!

-
- Give everyone an equal chance to speak. When a few people dominate a meeting and others remain silent, the discussions will be the poorer, and you risk making poor decisions.
 - Use small working groups when appropriate.
 - Be clear about lines of authority and accountability.
 - Begin and end meetings on time.
 - Reflect on a Bible passage at the start of every PCC meeting, for example by Dwelling in the Word (see resources).
 - Pray together at meetings. If this feels like a 'nod to God', try different ways of praying together.
 - Circulate draft minutes with clear actions within two weeks of a PCC meeting.
 - Agree and uphold a 'code of conduct' for meetings. (See page 15.)
 - Establish and use an induction process for new PCC members.
 - In multi-parish benefices, have all PCCs meet in different rooms

at the same venue (so that shared clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers can attend part of each meeting).

- Seek the support of deanery or diocesan staff when needed.

Reasonable expectations of all PCC members include:

- attending and participating in most PCC meetings
- arriving in enough time for meetings to start promptly
- treating fellow PCC members with respect at all times
- when disagreements arise, disagreeing well with other PCC members
- accepting the final decision of the PCC and supporting it when communicating with others, even when it conflicts with your own view.

Sometimes, and for various reasons, PCCs struggle to work as effective teams. There might also be issues which cause conflict. One of the best resources to help PCCs is the CPAS resource PCC Tonight. This six-session course helps PCCs to understand their role and structure

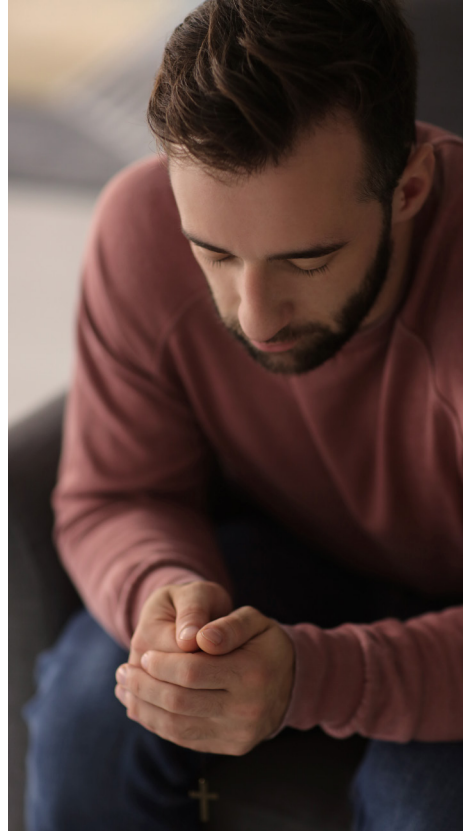
meetings that are a joy, rather than merely a duty or responsibility.

Support and resources

- Dwelling in the Word (oxford.anglican.org/how-to-dwell-in-the-word)
- *PCC Tonight* (CPAS)
This includes liturgy for a PCC meeting and other prayer resources.
(see *PCC Tonight**)
- Mission-shaped church councils (John Truscott Resources)
(see *Group**)

'I'm very tired after a full day at work, so it's hard to go out to a meeting that won't end until 10pm. I want to serve on the PCC of my church, but...'

A PCC member



*oxford.anglican.org/flourishing-together

Flourishing teams

Team working is a 'given' in many situations: in churches, in the voluntary sector and in the workplace. But not all teams work together well. In some cases, a team isn't even a team – it's a group.

When people gather because they have something in common (e.g. Christian faith), they are a *group*. So, we could call our congregation a group of Christians assembling for worship. A group becomes a team when the people are working towards a common purpose, sharing resources, knowledge and skills. A good PCC will function as a team, working together to lead the church and share their skills, rather than as a group of individuals gathering to discuss church matters. When a team works well together, the common purpose is achieved and things get done.

When you're working with others it's useful to check whether you're operating as a group or a team. It might help you to look at the short guide from John Truscott: 'What makes a group a team'.

 [oxford.anglican.org/
flourishing-together](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/flourishing-together)
(see *Team*)

When you are clear about this, you can decide whether or not you need to change anything to help

you work together better and to achieve your common purpose.

Advice from team leaders and members:

- Establish a clear purpose and common goal from the outset – and ensure this is known and supported by all team members.
- Develop trust and shared commitment to the team by building relationships.
- Be clear about what is agreed, who is responsible and the deadline date.
- Support and uphold team decisions, even if you disagree with them.
- Take an annual away-day together outside the parish for reflection and planning.
- Learn to disagree well.
- Assume the best of each other.
- Forgive each other.
- Be willing to be held to account.
- Build vision together.

Support and resources

- How to lead a team at church (John Truscott Resources) (see *Lead team**)
- Group behaviours to be aware of (John Truscott Resources) (see *Group**)
- *Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni (John Wiley & Sons); see also Five Dysfunctions YouTube video (see *Dysfunctions**)
- Beware committees (John Truscott Resources) (see *Beware committees**)
- *Relationships*
The Science of Emotions – a TEDx talk from Jaak Panksepp. (see *Emotions**)

A good volunteer culture is 'a system of shared assumptions, values and beliefs that govern how people behave with one another within the environment we operate in. If our aspiration is to become more Christ-like – a more contemplative, compassionate and courageous Church, then this should run through the way we engage with our volunteers, this becomes our culture.'

A churchwarden

*oxford.anglican.org/flourishing-together

Flourishing in a safe church

Churches are communities in which all kinds of power dynamics operate, and their effects can range from minor annoyance through to actual harm being done. Sometimes within a church everyone colludes in turning a blind eye to what is happening, which leads to the creation of an environment in which all kinds of abuse can occur. It is an issue which we all need to take seriously, and we need to be willing to challenge and be open to challenge from those around us, whatever position we hold.

Here are some first principles:

- Any kind of bullying, manipulation, gaslighting, abuse of power or position has no place in a church. Those who are aware of it have a responsibility to challenge it, and we all have a duty to protect and support those who fall victim to it.
- Just because someone has been around in the church for a long time does not mean that they are above challenge or scrutiny. Unacceptable behaviour needs to be called out.
- The church must be a safe place for everyone. This can only happen when we all see the cultivation of this as essential rather than a tick-box exercise. It is not simply the responsibility of the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- All those in positions of responsibility should engage with safeguarding training and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process.
- Some mistreatment can be subtle and can be directed against an individual who is in some way different – disabled, gay, divorced, autistic. People who are lonely or isolated can be at particular risk of harm.
- Sometimes things go wrong under our noses, because dots have not been joined, or people have not been sufficiently curious to ask the right questions. If it smells bad, it has probably gone off!
- When we suspect that something is not right, we may need external support. Never hesitate to contact an Area Dean, Lay Chair, Parish Development Adviser, archdeacon or bishop.

Support and resources

[oxford.anglican.org/safeguarding](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/safeguarding)

Flourishing clergy families

Living and working in a church house long-term brings challenges for everyone who shares a home with a member of clergy. Clergy families can find it especially difficult when parishioners and other visitors regularly come into their home for meetings and social events. It can be a challenge for clergy and those who live with them to set and keep boundaries to safeguard their home life and privacy.

The pressures may be different for the families of church leaders, lay or ordained, who live in their own homes, but the nature of church leadership means that those they live with can feel they come second to the church. We know that relationships, whether with family or friends, wither and die if they are not fed with attention, presence, communication, and time. Allowing our clergy and those who live with them the space to maintain personal relationships is crucial if everyone is to flourish.

Consider asking these questions about your clergy families and households:

- What are the unspoken expectations of the partners and children of the clergy in your church? Are these reasonable, and do they respect the privacy of each individual?
- How do you respect the personal space of your clergy and their families?
- How far do you consider the partners and children (if they have any) of your clergy as individuals in their own right rather than appendages to the clergy?
- If your clergy have recently joined the parish, how are those they live with being welcomed into church life? How do you respond if they do not wish to be involved?
- How are you encouraging your clergy to have clear boundaries to safeguard their private lives and relationships? How are you encouraging church members not to phone church leaders before 9am, after 9pm or during mealtimes, unless there is an emergency?

-
- Who funds tickets to church social events when clergy are present as part of their role, especially if the family of clergy are expected to attend?

Look at the list on page 17 to see what clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers are entitled to expect in terms of time off, time for prayer, reflection and professional development.

Reasonable expectations for those living with clergy include:

- to have a private life separate from the parish
- to have their work and career choices respected
- parishioners to knock on the door/ring the bell and wait for it to be answered before entering
- privacy within their home and garden. This may include certain rooms within clergy houses being 'off limits', either temporarily or permanently
- that clergy partners and children might choose not to attend church or church functions
- that clergy will sometimes say 'No' in order to safeguard their private life and their family or household.

Support and resources

- Oxon Spice – an independent network of clergy spouses in the Diocese of Oxford (oxonspice.wordpress.com)
- Clergy Support Trust (clergysupport.org.uk)
- *Musings of a Clergy Child* by Nell Goddard (BRF)
- *Public People, Private Lives* by Jean and Chris Burton (Mowbray)
- *The Leader and the Family* by Katharine Hill (Grove Books)
- *Living as a Clergy Spouse* by Matthew Caminer (Grove Books)
- *Families and how to survive them* by Robin Skynner and John Cleese (Ebury Publishing)

And finally...

We are engaged together in a wonderful enterprise. It is sometimes said that 'The local church is the hope of the world.' Local parish ministry, worship, prayer, outreach, pastoral care, social and environmental responsibility, when it is done faithfully and well, is the most powerful and missionally effective witness to the love of God in our midst. The way in which we work together speaks far more powerfully than any words can about how we understand this love and whether our faith has something life-giving and hope-filled to offer others. The great North African theologian Tertullian, who lived in the second century, imagines pagans looking at

Christians with wonder and saying to themselves, 'Look how these Christians love each other, and how they are ready to die for each other.'

We are living through extraordinary times, and it is important that we model working together lovingly and respectfully, caring for each other's wellbeing and longing for each other's flourishing. As followers of the Way, may our hearts be wise, innocent and tender as we work together to model God's love to a world which has never needed it more.

+Olivia Reading

Bishop of Reading

Notes

All weblinks can be found at oxford.anglican.org/flourishing-together; the list below indicates the title of each link on that page.

Foreword by the Bishop of Oxford

1 See *Set free*

Introduction

2 See *Covenant*

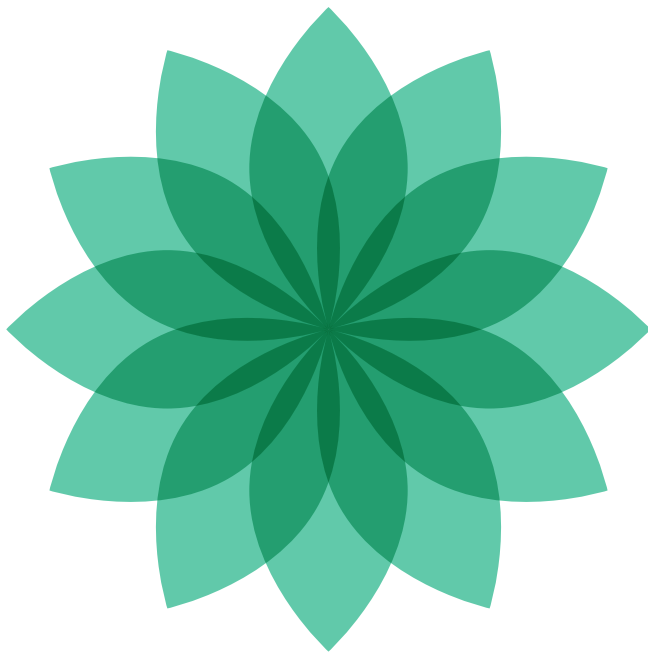
3 See *Local*

Flourishing through delegation

4 See *Delegate*

Flourishing Parochial Church Councils

5 See *PCC legislation*



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